



SOUTHERN REGIONAL RESEARCH CENTER

# On the Bayou

FEBRUARY 2019

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## Message from the Director

### Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

Welcome back everyone. I know the shutdown was difficult and challenging for everyone, maybe in different ways for each individual of our SRRC family. As an optimist, I am hopeful that things will work out for all of us, and we can return our focus to our research projects and other tasks that we have been assigned.

A heartfelt thanks to all of the excepted employees who were required to work during the shutdown, and to those who helped keep our facility maintained.

Another shutdown is possible, but we must continue to move forward while making plans and preparations in case one happens.

Welcome back once again. Let us stay positive and keep on working hard and good things will happen.

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## Events and Observances

### Ground Breaking Ceremony of New SRRC Greenhouse



**Ground breaking ceremony was held on 12-18-18.**

**Submitted by: K. Rajasekaran and Matt King**

For Food and Feed Safety Research Unit scientists working on the prevention of aflatoxin contamination of corn, it is essential to have a functional, climate controlled, BSL-2P-compliant greenhouse to accomplish their research objectives. Corn inbreds and hybrids need cooler temperature (less than 85°F) and high light intensity in addition to nutritional and pest control requirements for successful growing and cob-set.

The need for a new greenhouse that would provide these conditions was discussed with the NPL, Dr. James Lindsey in 2017. With additional funding and support from our SEA Area Director and the SRRC Director, we were able to get this plan off the ground. The new greenhouse will provide:

- 1) a secure BSL-2P-compliant facility as required by NIH and OHSA;
- 2) ability to grow corn year-around to advance progenies for field testing; currently we can grow only one crop in the cooler months in New Orleans (Oct-March); and
- 3) temperature-controlled, safe, and hospitable environment for testing resistance of new genotypes, or introduction of novel antifungal gene(s), and silencing of key genes essential for fungal growth, infection, and toxin production.

FFS scientists are interested in expanding and coordinating research with other ARS locations to control both aflatoxin and fumonisin contamination of corn.

The engineering design for the new greenhouse was completed in FY18 and construction started with test piles installed in Dec. 2018. Construction projections for this month include surveying slab area for location, size, and elevation; installing needed fill, while compacting, and driving piles.

The construction is expected to be completed by October 2019.

Submitted by: Shelia Parker

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is reminding employers to post the OSHA Form 300A, which lists a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred during 2018.

- The form must be posted between Feb. 1 and April 30, 2019.
- The summary must include the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred in 2018 and were logged on OSHA Form 300, *Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses*.
- The form must be signed and certified by a company executive.
- Form 300A should be displayed in common area where notices to employees are usually posted.
- All employers covered by OSHA need to comply with safety and health standards.
- All accidents that result in one or more fatalities or work-related inpatient hospitalization of employees must be reported verbally within eight hours to the nearest OSHA office. **(Area Safety Office should be contacted FIRST to provide guidance)**

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance.

**Congratulations to SRRC; we were one of the few Locations in SEA that had no injuries in 2018!!**

**New Orleans, La**

Jonesboro, AR

Mayaguez, PR

Jackson, TN

Stuttgart, AR

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Griffin, GA

Raleigh, NC

Dawson, GA

Fayetteville, AR



## ARS Biosafety and Safety Awareness Month

Since FY2015, the ARS Biosafety, Safety and Health Leadership Steering Committee has designated February as “ARS Biosafety and Safety Awareness Month.” However, given the January delays we are extending the timeframe to mid-March to plan and execute activities for 2019.

This year’s theme, in concert with the NIH National Biosafety Month, is “**Promoting a Culture of Biosafety/Safety and Responsibility.**” The 2015 Biosafety and Safety Awareness Month also established institutional safety culture as a key factor in the success of any biosafety or safety program.

## Safety Corner (cont.)

### Area Safety Inspection

**Submitted by: Shannon Beltz**

Our Area Safety & Health Manager, Shelia Parker was scheduled to visit us the first week of February. We were able to request a new date due to the shutdown. I will certainly let you all know when we have the new date. It will likely be late March, but nothing is set as of now.

In the meantime, we can start preparing for her visit by checking our paperwork and inspecting our labs.

Things to check:

- Does your WZSP need to be updated or signed?
- Is your door signage up-to-date with current contacts and phone numbers?
- Do you have any new equipment that needs a JHA (job hazard assessment)?
- Have you been inspecting my showers & eyewashes weekly?

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need some help with something.

Thanks very much. Shannon



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## Scientific Meetings

**Submitted by: Terri Von Hoven**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Feb 7 - 8   | International Conference on Science and Technology Research, Bangkok                              |
| Feb 10 - 13 | The Dubai Sugar Conference, Dubai   |
| Feb 18 - 20 | International Conference on Plant, Cellular Molecular Biology, Valencia, Spain                    |
| Feb 25      | International Conference on Agriculture, Forestry, Biotechnology and Food Science, Ottawa, Canada |
| Feb 26 - 27 | CED Life Science Conference, Raleigh, NC  |



### Combined Federal Campaign Extended to February 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski**

The recent partial government shutdown has affected many federal agencies, with many charities ready to help those in need. CFC is a **FULL CIRCLE OF GIVING** especially when you consider furloughed personnel who have made the CFC an annual giving tradition. As a result of this CFC tradition and the tremendous support of unaffected donors who stepped up to give during the shutdown, many CFC charity partners were ready and able to provide an immediate response.

People can continue making monetary or volunteer pledges online by going to [www.msdelatcfc.org](http://www.msdelatcfc.org) and clicking the "Donate" button.

**The Campaign has been extended and will remain open through February 22, 2019.**

Payroll deductions will not be delayed. They will be deducted from the **first FULL pay period** after January 15. Donors will see the CFC deduction on their February 8, 2019 LES statement.

Thank you for your support, and if you have any questions, please ask your keyworker or Suhad.

Suhad, CFC Coordinator

#### **Keyworkers:**

AO/DO Matt King  
CSQ Mia Schexnayder  
CFB Dawn Reed  
FFS Stephanie Gross  
CCU Crista Madison  
FPSQ Shawndrika Reed  
CU Kandan Sethumadhavan



### SRRC Annual Clothing Drive Extended to March 1<sup>st</sup>

**Submitted by: Janell Becker and Melissa Santos**

The Martin Luther King, Jr. & Day of Service Committee sponsors the SRRC 8<sup>TH</sup> Annual Clothing Drive in recognition of the 2019 National Service Day that recognizes and celebrates Martin Luther King's birthday.

Please consider donating men's, women's, and children's clean, unstained clothing items for this worthy cause. Blankets, purses, shoes, belts, etc. will also be accepted. Donations may be brought to the Administrative Office, where we will consolidate the clothing before delivery to Ozanam Inn.

Thank you for your generosity.

## Human Resources Corner (cont.)

### Omnilert system

During the shutdown, the best way to communicate with the staff was through the OMNILERT Message Center (previously called Amerilert). Omnilert is a safety communication system designed to assist the Agency with communicating time-sensitive information to our workforce. The system can send instant employee alerts, wherever employees are located. It helps keep employees informed of activities and events such as: Building Closures, Emergency Activities, Shutdown information.

Employees should review and update their contact information in the OMNILERT system as soon as possible. Please include a personal number and personal email so that you may be reached in the event of an emergency. (ARS also used the Omnilert service to communicate shutdown information and the resumption of operations.)

Everyone is encouraged to sign up for this means of communication, especially in case another shutdown happens during hurricane season. Employees may login here: <https://ars-usda2.omnilert.net/>

### Meeting Attendance and Doodle Polls

ARS employees attending conferences that are expected to exceed \$7,000 in total costs must enter their information into doodle polls set up on [Axon](#) to request conference preapproval.

Please complete 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter entries as soon as possible. Any entries submitted after **February 15<sup>th</sup>** may result in the inability to attend conferences. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter entries must be completed by **March 8<sup>th</sup>**.

For attending meetings, local or requiring travel, in most cases participation in a doodle poll is required. All requests for attendance **MUST** go through the Center Director's office, without exceptions.

### Death of Former Employee

We are sorry for the loss of our former employee Alden Henry Reine, Sr. who passed away peacefully on Jan. 21st. He served in various capacities, including Chemist with SRRC, Director of Research at Prairie View A&M University, and Director of Sponsored Programs at Xavier University of Louisiana, before retiring to enjoy his longtime passion of gardening.



### A Note from the Editorial Board

Thank you to all of the excepted employees who were required to work during the shutdown. We owe our colleagues a great deal of gratitude for their efforts – from watering plants to keeping the facility running. These employees carried out their excepted duties and responsibilities in an outstanding manner and we are thankful for their efforts.

And a special thanks to our timekeepers and AO for working all weekend to get payroll processed for pay period 26 and pay period 1. Most SRRC staff had their back pay (PP 26/PP 01) deposited in their account on Wed. Jan. 30. We were amongst the first ones to have this happen because of their hard work!

## Community Recognition

### Furloughed SRRC Employees Volunteer at Food Bank

**Submitted by: Matt Lebar and Carol Carter-Wientjes**

Members of the Food and Feed Safety Research Unit from SRRC volunteered at Second Harvest Food Bank during the partial government shutdown.

Second Harvest leads the fight against hunger in South Louisiana by providing food access, advocacy, education, and disaster response. Second Harvest provides food and support to 700+ community partners and programs across 23 parishes. Second Harvest staff and volunteers distribute the equivalent of more than 32 million meals to 210,000+ people a year. The SRRC group helped to sort and package weekend meals distributed to local kids in need. Helping others was a wonderful way to make use of idle furlough time! After the shutdown was over, group members continue to volunteer and plan future visits.

The SRRC food drive and Community Garden also provides supplies to Second Harvest.

Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up and view events at <https://no-hunger.org/volunteer/>



**February Recycling Dates: 14 and 28**



## February Events in New Orleans

Submitted by: Terri von Hoven

Feb 1 to 28	American and Afro-Caribbean Quilt Exhibit, Creative Alliance of NO
Feb 4	Game Night, St. Roch Market, New Orleans
Feb 4,11,18,25	Kids Code, free, Rosa Keller Library, New Orleans
Feb 4,11,18,25	Swing dance lessons, free, Dragon's Den, New Orleans
Feb 8 to 10	Tet Fest, Vietnamese New Year, St. Mary of Vietnam Church, NO
Feb 9	SweetArts Ball, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans
Feb 9	NOLA Fray's 0.5k - The Underachiever's "Run" New Orleans
Feb 9	Fruit for the homeless, volunteer with Salvation Army, New Orleans
Feb 9	Krewe of Chewbacchus, 7 pm, Marigny
Feb 15	Krewe Boheme, 7 pm, French Quarter
Feb 16	Krewe du Vieux, 6.30 p; Krewedelusion, 7 pm, French Quarter
Feb 17	Krewe of Little Rascals, noon, Metairie; 'tit Rex, 4.30 pm, Marigny
Feb 22	Krewes of Cork, 3pm, French Quarter; Oshun, 6.30, Cleopatra, 7 pm, Uptown; Krewe of Excaliber, 7.30 pm, Metairie
Feb 23	Knights of Adonis, 11.45 am, Westbank; Krewes of Pontchartrain, Choctaw, Freret, starting at 1 pm Uptown, Krewes of Sparta and Pygmalion, starting at 5.30 Uptown; Caesar, 6 pm, Metairie
Feb 24	Krewes of Femme Fatale, Carrollton, King Arthur, Alla, starting 11 am, Uptown; Barkus, 2 pm, French Quarter; Kings, 5.30 pm, Metairie
Feb 27	Krewes of Druids, 6.30 pm; Nyx, 7 pm, Uptown
Feb 28	Krewes of Babylon, 5.30 pm; Chaos, 6.15 pm, Muses, 6.30 pm, Uptown

Full MARDI GRAS parade schedule and routes: <https://www.mardigrasneworleans.com>





**Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski**

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